

JUNE'S GARDEN

LILIES

Somewhere I read, in the vast amount of gardening magazines, books and catalogs that seem to find my address, "Don't throw out your Easter Lily after it finishes blooming, plant it in your garden."

I did plant the bulb of an Easter Lily I had received and for several years it continued to produce flowers each season. The success of growing that lily inspired me to add Asiatic, Oriental and Trumpet varieties in my perennial flower beds.

The first ones to bloom each season in June are the Asiatics. These lilies are the hardiest and multiply the fastest. They are also valuable to use as cut flowers. When cutting a bouquet of lilies, remove not more than one-third of the stem; the leaves left on the remaining stem help rebuild the bulb for next year's blooms. Even if there are many buds on the cut stem along with a few open flowers, the buds will eventually open into full bloom. A bouquet of lilies will last for several days. I pick mine early in the morning and place them in a bucket filled with luke-warm water, leaving them in the bucket for a few hours before arranging them in a vase. This seems to help the cut stems to soak up enough moisture for the bouquet to last even longer.

As the Asiatic lilies finish blooming, the different varieties of Oriental and Trumpets first start blooming in mid-July. I've chosen different ones to bloom from July to August and the first of September. These lilies have the most fragrance. On a warm sunny day the open blossoms add fragrance to the garden. You only need to pick one or two stems of these lilies to fill your house with their perfume.

Lilies come in a wide range of colors: white, yellow, orange, and shades of red from dark maroon to light pink. Some are two-toned; also several are speckled with dark crimson spots.

Lily bulbs are hardy, but it is most important that they are planted in an area that has good drainage or the bulbs will rot. I have planted them in raised beds or some of the shorter-stemmed ones in containers. They need open space, light and air. Emerging sprouts should not be crowded. In the spring when the new growth begins to show I weed out any of the perennials that have grown too close.

Clay or sandy soil needs amendments of organic material. If your soil is clay, add sand or perlite, compost and commercial or well-aged manure. If the soil is sandy, add organic materials of compost, manure and wood products. My soil was mostly clay and through the years I've added peat moss, compost and a commercial amendment made up of manure, wood products and sand. This mixture is available to buy by the bag in most garden stores. Once a year I also feed the established bulbs with slow-release 9-16-16 fertilizer which comes in tablet form, burying the tablets close to the bulbs. I also use this same fertilizer when planting new bulbs.

I prefer to buy lily bulbs that have been grown in the Pacific Northwest as the bulbs have been conditioned to grow in similar conditions as my garden here on the northwest Pacific coast. I rarely have had to stake the taller plants. As the plant grows the stems become stiffer, adapting to coastal conditions. Gale force winds we have here along the coast generally do not damage either stems or buds, but could shred large open blossoms. Some of the most beautiful lilies in the world are grown on the bluffs overlooking the Pacific ocean on the west coast.

When buying bulbs from a nursery or from a catalog company, plant them as soon as you can, as lily bulbs never go dormant.

I have bought many bulbs from the local nurseries, also from a grower in Port Townsend, Wa. That's called B & D Lilies. To send for their catalog, the address is: B & D Lilies, P.O. Box 2007, Port Townsend, Wa. 98368; by telephone Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Pacific time), 360-765-4341; FAX 360-765-4074; on-line, www.bdlilies.com. Catalogs are sent in both fall and spring.

Lilies bought through this catalog are only shipped at the time they are to be planted regardless of when you order, as they are kept in cold storage and are conditioned to grow immediately at time of delivery. The bulbs that are sent from this nursery are hand-inspected for mechanical damage and soundness before packaging and they give extra attention to quality and size of each bulb to assure satisfaction.

My favorite lily this year that I had bought from them was an oriental called Acapulco. Mine produced three very fragrant bright deep pink blooms. The information on this lily also said that once it's established I could eventually have about 5 or 6 blooms to a stalk... Lily bulbs are more expensive than many plants; however you only need a few to add beauty and fragrance to your garden. Also especially the Asiatic hybrid bulbs will multiply rapidly and in time you will have many more plants.

Some information I've given in this column was taken from the B & D Lily Catalog.



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From The Lower Left Corner

Victoria Stoppello

For here, or to go?
Victoria Stoppello

I saw a crow eating at McDonald's. Crows are very bright birds, but not very discriminating when it comes to food. Crows don't care much whether their food is fresh; they're "opportunistic feeders." Of course, I'm a bit similar in that I'm always pleased to find leftovers in the fridge instead of having to make lunch from scratch.

This particular crow wasn't eating at McDonald's per se, but a couple miles away in Ilwaco. Someone had purchased an SA BIS 2 and an L HC at 9:55 AM and somehow the paper bag, food wrapper, bits of left over biscuit, and 4 unused napkins ended up on Spruce Street in Ilwaco at 12:50 PM on July 6. The person paid for their snack with a five dollar bill. All this I learned from the receipt which also was in the crow's lunch bag.

The crow took a few jabs at the paper bag, stood on it with one foot while extracting two chunks of biscuit with its beak. I figure the bag had been on the street for less than a half hour, because my experience with crows and stale crackers in our yard is, regardless of an apparent absence of crows, it takes less than 30 minutes for a crow, constantly scanning from the air, to spot something with food potential.

My first thought was that some thoughtless person had bought their McDonald's food, driven south through Ilwaco, and threw the wrappers out the car window, but on examining the receipt which said June 4, not even July 4, that was unlikely. Given this evidence, it's more likely the paper bag and its contents were deposited in a trash receptacle roughly a month before, and when the garbage truck came by with its mechanical hands and picked up the can, the lid of the receptacle opened, a breeze came by and lifted the McDonald's bag up and away from the truck and onto the street.

That little bit of litter had a slight and temporary impact on Ilwaco, but McDonald's impact in Long Beach is another story.

Whether you like McDonald's food or not, whether you patronize their outlets or not, McDonald's plays an interesting role in our towns and roadsides. For some people, McDonald's is a gastronomical security blanket in terms of obtaining reliable, predictable food in a strange community. It's a place where most kids will eat something on the menu and one has to admit, a lot of adult Americans revere hamburgers as comfort food.

On the other hand, McDonald's symbolizes the worst in freeway architecture, suburban sprawl, strip development, corporate cookie cutter food and buildings, and disregard for any sense of place. McDonald's will attempt to put exactly the same cheesy (is that to go or for here, sir?) building among Santa Fe's adobe, Vermont's white clapboard, and any big city's high rise environment.

It takes a tough, self-assured local government that is interested in smart development, not just any development, to stand up to McDonald's land use attorneys and corporate architects. Well, you probably never get to meet their architects; those guys most likely toil away at headquarter, using computers to put the same size McDonalds on a variety of lots in a variety of communities, all with the same rooflines, signs and materials. That is part of McDonald's success. They're easily recognizable, even from the freeway at sixty.

When you're driving through Long Beach, however, at 25 or 35 mph, a nice sign with McD's familiar golden arches would probably be enough to attract customers. But perhaps business hasn't been as good as some bottom-line-oriented corporate accountant figured when McDonald's came to Long Beach—for now the building is no longer the relatively subdued pastels that were part of McDonald's passing design review in Long Beach. As if the flashy, south-facing playplace wasn't already enough to belie any attempt to fit into the town's scheme for aesthetics, a new red and white paint job, with the subtlety of a crowbar, has appeared, plus a similarly garish sign out on the highway.

Methinks they think if they only advertised more, if they only could make sure everyone can find them, business will boom. Well, could be management is missing the point. When it comes to food, some of us would rather eat in locally owned places where we know the owners and expect the unexpected. And some of us might even be driven away from eating at a place which so blatantly thumbs its nose at community standards.

Victoria Stoppello writes from Ilwaco, at the lower left corner of Washington State.

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3